

"Is it you?" said Bessie, with an incredulous look. "Never a prayer do you need. Taking care of all of us, and of the like of me, from year's end to year's end. You'll go right up, Sister," and she tried to motion with her twisted hand and arm towards the blue sky.

The nun laughed softly; then, straightening the covers and giving a pressure to the hand that held the worn rosary, she went on her round of duty.

Poor Bessie had indeed suffered and prayed for fifteen years and offered it all for Charlie, her wild and only brother, who had drifted from the Church and was some place in the wide world—Bessie knew not where—but the marvellous faith of the poor cripple was so vivid that every one was interested in her, and her piety, patience and resignation made every one love her.

She had a remarkably sweet face and a soft, winning voice and the doctors and nurses who succeeded each other year after year looked on her as a prodigy and did everything skill and science could suggest, even though unavailing, to help her condition. But she never murmured when they told her after an unsuccessful operation or an agonizing examination that nothing could be done. She only smiled and said: "I don't mind; I'll suffer for poor Charlie."

Those fifteen years of torture were an apostolate for one single soul. A daily sermon was preached from that hospital cot, which was a silent but powerful incentive to many a discouraged heart to keep on and weary not. The Sisters felt Bessie's good influence in the hospital, and because she was incurable and without money or friends, they took tender care of her, and she loved them with all her soul.

One day the superior of the hospital came to me with a paper in her hand. "Father Alexander," she said, "I wonder if this could be Bessie's brother? It is a Pittsburg paper that has found its way somehow to St. Louis, and here is an account of an accident case—a man whose name is given as Charles Horton. He was taken to Southside Hospital. The name struck me—Charles Horton. Would it be worth while to inquire?"